



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Sawtooth
National
Forest

m/003/016
Burley/Twin Falls Ranger
District
3650 South Overland Ave.
Burley, Id. 83318-3242
(208) 678-0430
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File Code: 2810

Date: May 5, 1999

Dear Shareholder,

The Burley District of the Sawtooth National Forest is preparing to develop an environmental assessment to analyze the effects of operations of two Oakley Stone quarries in the west end of the Raft River Mountains in north west Box Elder County, Utah. The holder of the mining claims for the Dove Creek and Lynn Springs quarries has submitted Plans of Operation for both quarries for approval.

Enclosed is a "scoping" document that describes the proposed action. The Forest Service will study the concerns and issues of the proposal, operations at the two quarry sites, from all sources and develop a list of significant issues that will drive alternatives and the rest of environmental assessment. Some issues and concerns have already been identified by the Forest Service and are included in the attached Scoping Document. You are invited to submit any comments you have about the proposed action and they will be used to further develop the analysis.

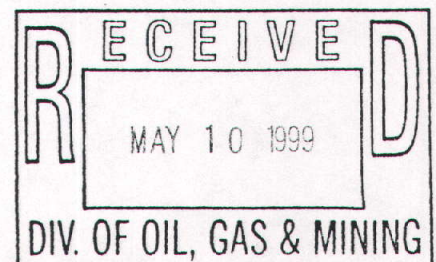
Please contact Gordon Struthers if you have any questions about this Oakley Stone proposal or the attached document. Your written comments will be of most help in the environmental analysis process if they are received at the Burley District office by June 18, 1999. Mail your comments to:

Gordon Struthers, Minerals Management Specialist
Burley Ranger District, Sawtooth National Forest
3650 Overland Ave.
Burley, ID 83318

Sincerely,

Pete Peterson
District Ranger

Enclosure



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCOPING DOCUMENT

DOVE CREEK AND LYNN SPRINGS QUARRY PLAN OF OPERATIONS APPROVAL

Burley Ranger District
Sawtooth National Forest
3650 Overland Ave.
Burley, Idaho 83318

PROPOSED ACTION

The Burley Ranger District of the Sawtooth National Forest is proposing to approve Plans of Operation for the Dove Creek and Lynn Springs Oakley stone quarries. The Plans of Operation (POO) was submitted to the Forest Service by the holder of the mining claims.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Both the Dove Creek and Lynn Springs quarries are located in the west end of the Raft River Mountains in Box Elder County, Utah. The Dove Creek quarry is on the south side of the mountain range in open sage and low brush rangeland. The Lynn Springs quarry is in a similar vegetative type, but does have juniper trees in the quarry area. Both quarries are planned to be in the 15 to 20 acre size, this does include acreage covered by quarry access roads, work areas and actual quarry sites. The quarries are in an area that the Sawtooth National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) has classified as IL, General Forest. The Forest Plan general direction for the Management Area IL for minerals management is that exploration and development of mineral and energy resources may occur (page IV-114 of the Forest Plan). The legal description of each quarry is as follows: Dove Creek - parts of Sections 13 and 14, T13N, R16W; Lynn Springs - parts of Sections 20 and 29, T14N, R16W. Note - Section 20 is administered by the BLM, Section 29 is administered by the Forest Service. The active portion of the claim, quarry, work areas and access roads is in Section 29. Section 20 has not been developed as yet. The mineral material being quarried is a quartzite commonly known as Oakley Stone. Operations at the Dove Creek site date to 1990, and 1978 for the Lynn Springs site.

Both quarries are to be worked with heavy equipment and blasting to break the stone loose. The heavy equipment to be use are large trackhoes and 10 and 20 yard dump trucks. Air compressors and air drills are used to prepare the stone ledge for blasting if the ledge being worked does not have enough natural fractures. The trackhoes then load the stone slabs into dump trucks for hauling to a process area. The processing areas are on the quarry site and at remote locations. At the processing site the stone slabs are hand split to size and sorted by grade and size class. At the present there is a international market for Oakley stone, however most is sold in the US.

On April 28, 1978 in the Office of Hearings and Appeals, USDI Administrative Law Judge John R. Rampton concluded that buildings stone claims of quartzite stone, located a few miles west and south of the Dove Creek and Lynn Springs, are a unique and valuable mineral deposit. It is therefore an

uncommon variety subject to location under the mining laws. The Forest Service does treat quartzite building stone of the Oakley type as uncommon material and is subject to the mining laws.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this action is to approve Plans of Operation for the two quarries that will serve as an agreement between the Forest Service and the operator of the quarries on how the quarries are to be operated and administered.

The need of the action is to comply with the mining laws pertaining to the disposal of uncommon mineral materials from National Forest system lands.

DECISION TO BE MADE

The decision to be made by the District Ranger is whether to approve the POOs as submitted or to approve them with modifications. A reclamation bond amount will also be necessary to insure that adequate site reclamation is done if the operator fails to do so upon closing or abandonment of the quarry.

ISSUES TO DATE

The following are project issues that have been identified to date:

1. Cultural resources in and near the quarry access roads and work area may be damaged. -NOTE- A cultural resource survey and report has been done for both sites and Utah SHPO has concurred with the Forest Service finding of 'no effect' on the Dove Creek site and the BLM finding of 'no effect' on the Lynn Springs site. The BLM directed the field survey and prepared the report for the Lynn Springs site.
2. The quarry operations could have an effect on threatened, endangered and sensitive plant and animal species. -NOTE- A Biological Assessment and Evaluation has been prepared for both quarry sites. The document states that there is 'no effect' or there is no habitat within the project area for all species of concern.
3. Will operations effect big game winter range? -NOTE- There is no proposal to operate the quarries in the winter. There will be no effect on winter range. The proposal is for operation several weeks during the summer and early fall.
4. There is a concern that quarry activities will impact public access in the general area of the quarries. -NOTE- Neither quarry site sets astride a road that is considered public access. Also there has been no request by the operator of the quarries to limit public access. Both quarries are located at the end of dead-end roads.
5. There is a concern that the quarries will be allowed to expand to unlimited size with little reclamation work. -NOTE- Both POOs speak to reclamation as work progresses. Pass experience (last 5 years) indicates that the quarries expand at less than one acre per year. Also reclamation bonds are calculated on area disturbed, more area is equal to a higher reclamation bond.
6. There is a concern that hazardous materials and fuels will be stored on site. -NOTE- As the plans were submitted, there would be no fuels, lubricants or explosives stored on site and no materials that could be

considered as hazardous are necessary for the quarry operations. The rock on site, waste and usable stone is inert in its makeup.

7. There is a concern water quality will be impacted by erosion from the quarry sites and the access roads.

8. Is there any needs for water for the operation of the quarries.- NOTE- Water is not need for operations as the plans were submitted.

9. There is a need for the quarry operator to get additional permits from other agencies. Box Elder County needs to have a Road Maintenance Agreement and an excavation permit with the operator of the quarries. Health permits from the Bear River Health for camps and work areas may be needed. Utah Division of Water Quality may require a storm water drainage permit. Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining is working with the Forest Service in a joint permitting process for the approval of the Plan of Operations and reclamation bonding.

ALTERNATIVES

The following are the alternatives developed to date for the proposal:

No Action, the Forest Service would not authorize the proposed action or any action alternative. However, the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, gives the quarry operator certain rights to conduct mining operations on public lands. Consideration of the No Action Alternative is required by NEPA and serves as a baseline for evaluation of other alternatives.

Approval of the Plan of Operation as submitted. This does include a reasonable reclamation bond be submitted.

Approval of the Plan of Operations with modifications. This also includes a reasonable reclamation bond be submitted. The modifications would be plan amendments provided by the Forest Service to protect surface resources and agreed to by the operator.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public is requested to submit written input on this proposed action accompanied with any additional issues, concerns or alternatives they may have to the Forest Service. Written comments should be received by June 18, 1999 in order to be helpful in completing this environmental assessment. Send comments to:

Gordon Struthers, Minerals Management Specialist
Burley Ranger District
3650 Overland Ave.
Burley, Idaho 83318

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment will be considered part of the public record of this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered, however, those

submitted anonymously will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 and 217. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27 (d) any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that under FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as protecting trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the requests denied, the agency will return the submission with or without the name and address within 10 days.